

## THE NEW PLAYS

Marjorie Rambeau Transfigured  
in "Daddy's Gone a-Hunting."

BY CHARLES DARNTON.

Fine understanding and sympathy have been shown by Zoe Akins in "Daddy's Gone a-Hunting," produced with great care—a bit too much care perhaps—by Arthur Hopkins last night at the Plymouth Theatre. The occasion also marked the equally fine development of Marjorie Rambeau as an actress of the first rank.

Just as people often make a mess of their lives, so life sometimes makes a mess of them, Miss Akins would seem to point out. The damnable part of it is that no one's really to blame—there's not even that consolation. A change takes place and everything becomes a hopeless muddle. Julian Fields is quite honest about it when he comes back to his wife in a Harlem flat after a year in Paris, where he had worked to make an artist of himself. His wife, Edith, has made joyous preparation for the home-coming, and with their little girl she races downstairs to see which will get the first kiss.

But he is unbelievably casual, and has even brought along two bohemians, though fortunately they clear out when the woman finds no piano in the place. At the pitiful dinner Edith finally gives way to tears and asks her husband what has happened. He merely tells her that the year has worked a change in him; that he has found life means something more than love and marriage and a child. He does his best to make her understand, but he is so matter-of-fact, not to say merciless, that all she can understand is he no longer loves her.

Though they are still living together a year later in a studio, they are really worlds apart. He grants her the same freedom he takes as his right and is willing she should wear bracelets brought her by Greenough, who loves her.

This to her is horrible, and with hysterical cries she rushes out of the studio. Five years after she is living with Greenough. She believes she loves the man and gives her word she will marry him. Her daughter is in a hospital and she thinks that Greenough, with his

money, has been able to save the child's life. Then she is told that little Janet is dead. This stirs her

old feeling for Julian, though probably it is more a maternal one. At any rate, she makes Greenough understand, and she calls back Julian. But he understands better than she that without the child their life together would mean nothing, and so he goes his way. Edith is left without anyone.

There is deep pain in this human tragedy, the pain that comes of seeing intelligent, clean-minded people struggling vainly against it. In the end they are like so many fragments left to tell of a wreck. Still there remains the conviction that "Daddy's Gone a-Hunting" is an uncommonly well written and interesting play, for which discriminating theatregoers may well be grateful.

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